



New Stink Bug Species Invades Dane County

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Note pronunciation: MAR mer ate ed

A high resolution photo, with credit information, is available at <http://tinyurl.com/pze9na6>

MADISON – Plant pest authorities in Wisconsin say that a new home-invading nuisance, the brown marmorated stink bug, is turning up in the Madison area this fall and has likely become established in Dane County.

"People might be familiar with native species of stink bugs, but the brown marmorated stink bug is an exotic. It originates from Eastern Asia, and like other exotics, it lacks natural enemies," said Brian Kuhn, director of the Bureau of Plant Industry in the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. "In other parts of the nation where it has been found, it has attacked a wide range of agricultural, garden and ornamental plants, and gets into homes to overwinter."



Gary Berton, USDA APHIS, Bugwood.org

Like boxelder bugs and some other fall-invading pests, they may congregate on the outside of buildings in autumn and sneak into small openings seeking shelter. They do not reproduce indoors, however.

Because fruit trees are a favorite food for the insect, Wisconsin apple growers have been particularly worried that it would make its way to the state. Feeding on apples and other tree fruits, these bugs cause distortions on the surface of the fruit with underlying bruised spots in the flesh. In states where they have become established, they have also attacked peaches, mulberries, soybeans, sweet and field corn, tomatoes, lima beans, green peppers, and ornamental plants.

Brown marmorated stink bugs look very similar to native stink bugs. They are shield shaped, a half inch to three-quarters inch long, and are marbled ("marmorated") with different shades of brown. Their antennae have light and dark bands, which distinguishes them from other stink bug species. They have scent glands that are the source of their name.

They have become well established in some states – mostly in the East, but also in California, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Washington. In many other states, they have been sighted but reproducing populations have not been found. This had been the case in Wisconsin previously. Now, however, University of Wisconsin-Extension entomologist P.J. Liesch says he has verified enough sightings in Madison to suggest that the insect has established itself there.

Anyone who finds a suspect bug can email a photo to pliesch@wisc.edu. You can also send a sample to the Insect Diagnostic Laboratory, 1630 Linden Drive, 240 Russell Labs, Madison, WI 53706. For instructions for preparing samples, go to labs.russell.wisc.edu/insectlab/samples/.

The best way to keep brown marmorated stink bugs out of homes is to use good quality silicone or silicone-latex caulk to seal spaces around windows, doors, siding, utility pipes, chimneys and other openings. Properly applying insecticides labeled for this use may provide some relief, but sunlight breaks these insecticides down, so they are effective for only a week or less.

If you do find them inside the house, you can prevent more from entering by caulking around interior trim on windows and doors, and around exhaust fans and ceiling lights. Vacuuming them will release their odor, which may linger in the vacuum cleaner bag for some time. ###